



Teacher education is a deeply pedagogical process rooted in values, ethics, and the social purpose of schooling. Globally, it sits at the core of educational quality and fairness, as research in comparative and international education demonstrates: the training of teachers directly influences students' learning chances, social inclusion, and the democratic aims of schools. Teachers are not simply transmitters of curricula, but active professionals whose convictions, reflective skills, and ability to manage the complexities of classroom life give shape and substance to the educational experience itself.

The pedagogical dimension of teacher education frames teaching as a relational, context-aware, and ethically grounded profession rather than just a set of procedural skills. From a research perspective, this demands robust research methodologies that can critically examine the complex realities of schools and inform evidence-based policies. Equally important is the connection between theory and practice, which helps to bridge the persistent gap between universities and schools.

The contributions gathered in this volume reflect the richness and diversity of experiences showcased during the ATEE Spring Conference 2024, held at the University of Bergamo from May 29 to June 1, 2024. The volume presents 70 selected papers out of more than 300 presented by researchers representing over 40 countries.

This broad spectrum of studies highlights promising directions that can inspire renewed inquiry and concrete proposals aimed at improving contemporary educational systems.

FRANCESCO MAGNI is an Associate Professor of General and Social Pedagogy (PAED-01/A) at the Department of Human and Social Sciences, University of Bergamo, Italy. He is a member of the board and Deputy Director of CQIIA (Center for the Quality of Teaching, Didactic Innovation, and Learning). He is also a member of the ATEE - Association for Teacher Education in Europe.

NICOLE BIANQUIN is an Associate Professor of Didactics and Special Education (PAED-02/A) at the Department of Human and Social Sciences, University of the Aosta Valley, Aosta, Italy. She is a member of the ATEE - Association for Teacher Education in Europe.

ATEE Spring Conference 2024

ATEE Spring Conference 2024

Teacher education research in Europe: trends, challenges, practices and perspectives

May 29th – June 1st, 2024
S. Agostino, Bergamo



Edited by Nicole Bianquin and Francesco Magni





UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI BERGAMO | Dipartimento
di Scienze Umane
e Sociali



CQIA

Centro per la Qualità dell'Insegnamento,
dell'Innovazione Didattica e dell'Apprendimento
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI
DI BERGAMO



BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS

ATEE Spring Conference 2024

Teacher education research in Europe:
trends, challenges, practices and perspectives

May 29th – June 1st, 2024

S. Agostino, 2 - Bergamo, Italy

Edited by Nicole Bianquin and Francesco Magni



Università degli studi di Bergamo

2025

BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS ATEE Spring Conference 2024. Teacher education research in Europe: trends, challenges, practices and perspectives / Nicole Bianquin, Francesco Magni (edited by) - Bergamo: Università degli studi di Bergamo, 2025

ISBN: **978-88-97253-27-3**

DOI: [10.62336/unibg.978-88-97253-27-3](https://doi.org/10.62336/unibg.978-88-97253-27-3)

This publication is released under the Creative Commons
[Attribution Non-Commercial No Derivatives license \(CC BY-NC-ND 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)



© 2025 The Authors

<https://aisberg.unibg.it/handle/10446/309209>

An event organised by:

Dipartimento di Scienze Umane e Sociali, **University of Bergamo** // www.dsus.unibg.it

CQIIA – Centro per la Qualità dell’Insegnamento, dell’Innovazione didattica e dell’Apprendimento, **University of Bergamo** // www.cqia.unibg.it

ATEE – Association for Teacher Education in Europe // www.atee.education

In collaboration with:

Siped
Società Italiana di Pedagogia
fondata nel 1989

SIPED
Società Italiana di
Pedagogia

BAUHAUS4EU
European University Alliance

Bahuhus4EU
European University
Alliance



CIRSE
Centro italiano per la
ricerca storico
educativa

SIRD
Società Italiana di Ricerca Didattica

SIRD
Società Italiana di Ricerca
Didattica

SIPSE
SOCIETÀ ITALIANA
PER LO STUDIO DEL
PATRIMONIO
STORICO-EDUCATIVO

SIPSE
Società Italiana per lo
Studio del Patrimonio
Storico-Educativo

**COMENIUS
ASSOCIATION
COMENIUS**

Comenius Association
European Higher Education
Network of Teacher and
Social Education

sipeges
Associazione italiana di pedagogia generale e sociale

SIPeGeS
Società Italiana di
Pedagogia Generale e
Sociale

EFVET
European Forum
of Technical
and Vocational
Education and Training

EfVET
European forum of
Technical and Vocational
Education and Training

SIPeS
Società Italiana
di Pedagogia
speciale

SIPeS
Società Italiana di
Pedagogia Speciale

ETF
Working Together
Learning for All
European Training Foundation

ETF
European Training
Foundation

C.I.R.PED
Centro
Italiano di
Ricerca
Pedagogica

C.I.R.PED
Centro Italiano di
Ricerca Pedagogica

INVALSI

INVALSI
Istituto nazionale per
la valutazione del
sistema educativo di
istruzione e di
formazione

SIREF
Società Italiana di Ricerca Educativa e Formativa

SIREF
Società Italiana di
Ricerca Educativa e
Formativa

**Ufficio
Scolastico
Territoriale
di Bergamo**

**Ufficio Scolastico
Territoriale di Bergamo**

Conference Chair

Nicole Bianquin, associate professor in Special Education, University of the Aosta Valley, ATEE member;

Francesco Magni, associate professor in Education, University of Bergamo, ATEE member.

Scientific committee

Adolfo Scotto Di Luzio, Vice-Rector for Didactics, Guidance and Placement, University of Bergamo, Italy

Marco Lazzari, Head of the Department of Human and Social Sciences, University of Bergamo, Italy (until September 2024).

Anna Maria Falzoni, Director of CQIIA - Centre for Teaching Quality, Teaching Innovation and Learning, University of Bergamo, Italy

Maria Assunção Flores, University of Minho, Portugal

Joanne Banks, Trinity College of Dublin, Ireland

Federica Baroni, University of Bergamo, Italy

Tore Bernt Sorensen, University of Glasgow,

Scotland (UK)

Paolo Bertuletti, University of Bergamo, Italy

Serenella Besio, University of Bergamo, Italy

Antonio Borgogni, University of Bergamo, Italy

T.J. Ó Ceallaigh, University College Cork, Ireland;

ATEE AC member

Monica Crotti, University of Bergamo, Italy

Linda Daniela, University of Latvia, Latvia

Dietmar Frommberger, University of Osnabrück,

Germany

Paola Gandolfi, University of Bergamo, Italy

Mabel Giraldo, University of Bergamo, Italy

Etti Gordon Ginzburg, Oranim College of Education,

Israel

Michiel Heijnen, Marnix Academy, Netherlands; ATEE

AC President

Erika Kopp, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary;

ATEE AC member

Marta Kowalczyk-Walędziak, University of Białystok,

Poland

Anna Lazzarini, University of Bergamo, Italy

Hagen Lehmann, University of Bergamo, Italy

Nicola Lovecchio, University of Bergamo, Italy

Gale MacLeod, University of Edinburgh, Scotland

(UK)

Fernando Marhuenda Fluixá, Universitat de València, Spain

Alessandra Mazzini, University of Bergamo, Italy

Sara Nijs, Leuven University, Belgium,

Katrin Poom-Valickis, University of Tallinn, Estonia

Andrea Potestio, University of Bergamo, Italy

Evelina Scaglia, University of Bergamo, Italy

Johannes Karl Schmees, Norwegian University of

Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway

Leah Shagrir, Levinsky College of Education, Israel;

ATEE AC member

Olena Shyyann, Lviv State University of Physical

Culture, Ukraine; ATEE AC member

Vasileios Symeonidis, Pädagogische Hochschule

Freiburg, Germany

Ronny Smet, Karel de Grote University of Applied

Science and Arts, Belgium; RDCs Coordinator of

ATEE

Agnieszka Szplit, Jan Kochanowski University of

Kielce, Poland; ATEE AC Vice-President

Elena Theodoropoulou, University of the Aegean,

Greece

Philippe Tremblay, Université de Laval, Québec

Vidmantas Tūtlys, Academy of Education, Vytautas

Magnus University, Lithuania

Wieland Wermke, Stockholm University, Sweden

Mara Westling Allodi, Stockholm University, Sweden

Jenny Wilder, Stockholm University, Sweden

Rano Zakirova Engstrand, Stockholm University,

Sweden

Organizing committee

Virginia Capriotti, University of Bergamo

Sara Cecchetti, University of Bergamo

Federico Chiappetta, University of Bergamo

Emilio Conte, University of Bergamo

Ester Guerini, University of Bergamo

Paolo Lazzaroni, University of Bergamo

Alice Locatelli, University of Bergamo

Isabel Maggiarra, University of Bergamo

Fabio Sacchi, University of Bergamo

Arianna Taravella, University of Bergamo

Table of contents

Introduction

Francesco Magni, Nicole Bianquin, *Back to the Core: Rediscovering the Power of Teacher Education Research* 7

Teacher education and pedagogical perspective in uncertain times: history, theory, policies and practices

Brigitta Bekesi, Eva Ulbrich, Tony Houghton, Jana Trgalova & Zsolt Lavicza, *The Reflected Double Tetrahedron Model: Project-based learning in teacher training* 11

Andrea Dessardo, «*The Italian didactic secret*». *Teachers' education according to Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice's thought* 19

Ylenia Falzone & Alessandra La Marca, *Lifelong Learning for Mongolia: Occupational Health & Safety project (3L4MHOS)* 25

Ylenia Falzone, Benedetta Miro & Elif Gülbay, *Teachers and Artificial Intelligence: Developing Digital Citizenship Skills* 31

Eleonora Florio, Tanu Biswas, Ilaria Castelli & Letizia Caso, *Bleak Pedagogy: A new term unveiled from research on Adultcentrism* 38

Deirdre Harvey & Maria Campbell, *Promoting and supporting learner resilience in the hospital school* 44

Aggelos Kavasakalis & Angeliki-Despoina Varouxli, *Reasons and beliefs of (Greek) teachers for participating in an MSc relevant to their profession* 54

Semih Kaygisiz & Hanife Akar, *Challenges Head to Train Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teachers* 62

Sabina Leoncini, *Gender Stereotypes between School and Guidance: A Look at European Regulations and Vocational Education in Italy* 69

Silvia Maggiolini & Elena Zanfroni, *Emergency and people with intellectual disabilities. Teachers' training in the LEBEL proposal* 77

Cristina Miralles-Cardona, María C. Cardona-Moltó & José M. Esteve-Faubel, <i>Gender-responsive teaching: What strategies are teacher educators using for gender mainstreaming implementation?</i>	83
Benedetta Miro & Alessandra La Marca, <i>Service Learning in teacher education for soft skills development</i>	93
Georgia Natsiou & Melpomeni Tsitouridou, <i>Reflecting together online and offline: A systematic review on the types of peer reflection activities in teacher education</i>	102
Laura Parigi & Maria Elisabetta Cicognini, <i>Exploring the Transformative Impact of Teacher Professional Development on Student-Centered Assessment Approaches</i>	109
Francesca Pileggi, <i>Non-cognitive competence and critical-creative skills. A critical review of the current perspectives</i>	116
Francis J. Prescott-Pickup, <i>Finding a successful teacher identity: the role of the mentor-mentee relationship</i>	122
Nathanaili Valbona, <i>Analyzing poor academic performance of Albanian pupils in PISA</i>	129
Elena Zanfroni, <i>Problematic behaviours and classroom management: teachers' representations</i>	137

Teaching and learning challenges and professional development

Monica Banzato, <i>Attitudes of Humanities Students and Aspiring Teachers Toward Quantitative Educational Research: An Introductory Study</i>	146
Ane Bergersen, <i>Global awareness and professional teacher competence through student mobility from Norway to Zambia</i>	152
Barbara Bocchi, Elena Bortolitti & Paola Damiani, <i>Informal Support Teacher Networks: training and self-training between Communities of Practice</i>	160
Barbara Bocchi, Elena Bortolitti, Paola Damiani, Giuseppe Filippo Dettori & Barbara Letteri, <i>The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in inclusive learning: an exploratory investigation</i>	167
Virginia Capriotti, <i>The Impact of Teaching and Learning Centers (TLCs) on Initial Teacher Education Programs in Italy</i>	176
Giorgia Coppola, <i>From Burnout toward Pedagogical Teacher Education. A communities perspective</i>	183
Alexandra Efstathiades, Christiane Gesierich, Christian Rudloff & Anna Kapsalis, <i>FOOTT PRINTTS: Advancing Quality Standards in Teacher Training</i>	189

Elena Gabbi, Ilaria ancillotti & Maria Ranieri, <i>Rethinking digital competences for teaching in the Post-Covid Era: A participatory approach</i>	197
Marco Giganti, <i>Emergency Remote Teaching and Teacher Training: The Role of Implicit Beliefs in Lasting Educational Change</i>	205
Hege Knudsmoen & Mette Birgitte Helleve, <i>Develop teachers' professional identity through global internship</i>	212
Charlotte Kohlloffel, <i>Opening the black box of writing instruction in times of change: insights from Italian secondary school teachers</i>	220
Regine Lehberger, <i>A learning-design to promote reflection and digital media skills for professionalisation of teacher students</i>	229
Marica Liotino, Taiwo Isaac Olatunji, Marianne Grace Araneta, & Monica Fedeli, <i>Reflective Practice in MOOCs: Exploring the Role of Tutors and Fostering Teacher Professional Development</i>	236
Cristina Lisimberty & Katia Montalbetti, <i>Guiding students from lower to upper secondary: a challenging and shared task for families and schools</i>	244
Sabrina Natali, <i>Rethinking teacher training in emotional education through sports</i>	256
Sara Nosari & Emanuela Guarcello, <i>The question of non-cognitive skills and the cheetah's coat perspective</i>	262
Alessandro Oro, Ira Vannini & Elisa Guasconi, <i>A formative assessment framework to develop primary school pre-service and in-service teachers' video analysis programs</i>	271
Federica Pelizzari & Simona Ferrari, <i>Exploring Coding and Educational Robotics in Primary Schools. Results and Perspectives from an Action Research Approach to Teaching Innovation</i>	278
Annfrid Rosey & Tove Leming, <i>Internationalization in Teacher Education: How can student practice in Southern Africa contribute to strengthening the professional work as teachers in Northern Norway?</i>	293
Stefano Spennati, <i>Educating on complexity at the time of transition</i>	300
Chiara Urbani, <i>Collaborative and epistemic advances: a study on teacher agency</i>	305
Gerd Wikan, <i>Global Teachers and Practicum in the Global South. A study of Long-Term Impact of International Practicum in Namibia</i>	312
Franco Zengaro & Sally A. Zengaro, <i>Teachers Reflect on Their Identities as Former Students and Future Teachers</i>	318
Sally A. Zengaro & Franco Zengaro, <i>Supporting Active Learning in Online Learning: Creating a Culture of Care</i>	326

Inclusion in teaching and learning processes and school improvement

Luca Angelone & Federica Festa, <i>Cultivating Inclusive Education: A Collaborative Journey of Secondary School Teachers in Promoting Cognitive and Linguistic Accessibility through Picture Books and AAC</i>	333
Luca Ballestra Caffaratti, Cecilia Marchisio, Alessandro Monchietto, Alessandro Zanzo & Marco Secchia, <i>The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Secondary Schools: Experiences in Initial Teacher Training</i>	340
Daniele Bullegas & Martina Monteverde, <i>Theory into practice: exploring teacher perceptions about Early Intervention in the Italian school system</i>	346
Sara Cecchetti & Nicole Bianquin, <i>The work plan (Plan de Travail) as an educational device that addresses everyone's needs. A survey of teachers' and pupils' perspectives</i>	354
Federica Cilia, Jeanne Kruck, Marie-Hélène Plumet & Mélina Dell'armi, <i>Well-Being and Social Participation of Autism Spectrum Disorder Students at University: the impact of Atypie Friendly Inclusion Program</i>	362
Alice Di Leva & Federica Festa, <i>The Student Voice in teacher training, an investigation into the inclusiveness of European practices</i>	370
Ilaria Folci & Anna Monauni, <i>Differentiation in Preschool. Pedagogical Issues and Best Practices</i>	378
Mabel Giraldo & Fabio Sacchi, <i>Planning the transition to adulthood for students with disabilities: knowledge, perceptions, challenges from STRADE teacher training program</i>	384
Jørgen Klein, Ann Sylvi Larsen & Tove Grete Lie, <i>'People are people' - An investigation of long-term impacts of an international practicum</i>	393
Daniela Maccario & Annamaria Garibaldi, <i>Helping to learn. What are good practices of educational intervention? Structure and preliminary results of a participatory research study</i>	400
Cecilia Marchisio & Alessandro Monchietto, <i>Improving Inclusive Education: The Turin Model of Collaboration between Schools, Universities and Communities</i>	405
Francesca Placanica, Rosa Sgambelluri & Alessandra Priore, <i>Life Designing and inclusive prospects in Italian schools</i>	411
Ilaria Ravasi, <i>Preventing early school leaving. Perspectives of intervention research between school and territory</i>	417

Digital innovation and artificial intelligence (AI): schools, teachers and students between real and virtual world

Valentina Berardinetti, Michele Ciletti, Andreana Lavanga & Giusi Antonia Toto, <i>Digital Innovation and Artificial Intelligence in Museum Education: perspectives, debates and psychological implications</i>	424
Roxana-Madalina Cristea, <i>Investigating the Relationships between In-service Teachers' Technology Pedagogy Content Knowledge and Virtual Learning Environment Success</i>	432
Francesca De Vitis & Marcello Tempesta, <i>Touch in small hands. Responding to the challenges of technology in childhood 0-6</i>	439
Silvia Larghi & Edoardo Datteri, <i>Programming errors and the attribution of intentionality to educational robots</i>	445
Juliana Elisa Raffaghelli, Francesca Crudele, Laura Foschi & Graziano Cecchinato, <i>Let me introduce open education... Facilitating Prospective teachers' understanding of open Education through an ai-based tool</i>	453
Alice Roffi, <i>Digital technologies and collaborative activities for science teaching in the upper secondary school: a qualitative study on teacher's perspective</i>	464
Alice Roffi, Gabriele Biagini, Stefano Cuomo & Maria Ranieri, <i>Development of teachers' competences on Learning Design and on supporting student's Self-Regulated Learning in the lower secondary school</i>	472
Marcello Tempesta, <i>Teacher education and motivation culture</i>	481

School & work and the role of teachers in Vocational Education and Training

Maria Concetta Carruba, Mariateresa Cairo & Magdalena Tsoneva, <i>Comparative Analysis of Inclusive Education Practices in Italy and Bulgaria: Reflections from the Erasmus Plus ASuMIE Project</i>	488
Valerio Ferrero, <i>Teacher Education as a Game Changer: Non-Traditional Factors of Inequality and the Role of Teachers for Equity</i>	494
Anna Granata & Valerio Ferrero, <i>Beyond Patriarchy: Teaching Profession, Gender Issues and Teacher Education in Italy</i>	502
Paola Zini & Dalila Raccagni, <i>Teacher training and well-being best practices: the 3H project</i>	508



POSTER SESSION

Antinea Ambretti, Chiara Gamberini & Arianna Fogliata, *Integration of the Sincrony method in physical education during school age in the digital era* 517

Francesca Finestrone, *Music as an inclusive tool for promoting a sustainable Culture* 523

Francesca Finestrone, Francesco Pio Savino, Leonardo Palmisano & Giusi Antonia Toto, *Nature Connection and Music in Early Education: Insights from the CNS-ch Scale and TEAL Methods* 532

Paula Matijašević, Bruno Matijašević, Ana Žnidarec Čučković & Vesna Babić, *Kinesiologists' and Coaches' Self-Assessment of Their Pedagogical Competences* 538

The contributions published in this book of proceedings have been evaluated through a double-blind peer review process. We would like to thank the members of the Scientific Committee, as well as the many other professors, researchers and experts who agreed to act as reviewers.

Finding a successful teacher identity: the role of the mentor-mentee relationship

Francis J. Prescott-Pickup, *Eötvös Loránd University*, francis.prescott@btk.elte.hu

Abstract

This paper reports on part of an ongoing research study into the experience of pre-service trainee teachers of English as a foreign language in a large university in Hungary. In particular, it focuses on their relationships with their mentors during their short and long teaching practicums in public schools at the end of their six-year training. In the summer of 2023, 33 graduating trainees agreed to be interviewed online. An interview guide was used for the in-depth interviews and the transcriptions were analysed thematically to build descriptive categories. The key categories describe the trainees' relationships with their mentors and how these relationships affected their view of themselves as teachers. The trainees' ideas of what would make an ideal mentor are also discussed.

Key words: teacher training; mentor-mentee relationship; qualitative research; in-depth interview; EFL.

1. Introduction

In a time when many countries within Europe and beyond are experiencing serious problems keeping newly qualified teachers in the public education system (European Commission, 2023), it is important to understand what factors affect the development of trainee teachers during the most crucial period of their training: their teaching practice (Heinz, 2024). At the centre of their experience during their practice lies their relationship with their mentor teacher, the nature of which has a determining influence on their ability to successfully develop a teaching identity for themselves and may also play a decisive role in their decision on whether to remain in the profession beyond the completion of their degree. Given the importance of this relationship it seems worth investigating it in more detail.

The present paper draws on data from one phase of an ongoing research project investigating the experience of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher trainees in Hungary. The first phase of the project involved 13 trainees doing their teaching practice during the Covid-19 pandemic (Prescott-Pickup, 2023). In the second phase the experiences of 33 trainees who were graduating in the summer of 2023 were investigated. Both studies used video-recorded in-depth qualitative interviews based on an interview guide (Patton, 2014). This paper seeks to describe the trainees' relationships with their mentors in order to identify those characteristics most associated with success or failure in the functioning of this vital partnership, and also to see how the nature of the relationship between mentor and mentee might affect the trainees' thinking about themselves as teachers. Specific problems which can lead to breakdown in the relationship will be highlighted, as well as the characteristics of successful relationships. It is hoped that the findings may be useful to both future mentors and to teacher educators generally.

In the last few decades pre-service teacher training in tertiary institutions around the world took a so-called "practice turn" (Reid, 2011) promoted by institutions such as the Council of the European Union (2014) and the OECD (2019). This has resulted in much closer partnerships between university training programmes and public schools with an emphasis on pre-service training done in schools. The focus of mentoring has therefore shifted from the university to the school, with the figure of the in-school mentor taking on an increased significance. The job of the mentor in school-based practicums has been conceptualized in various ways with earlier models taking the lead from the world of management. The situational leadership model of Bailey (2006) places the onus on the leadership behaviour of the supervisor fostering the individual development of the trainee, but a more holistic model has been advanced recently. Malderez (2024), an experienced mentor trainer familiar with the Hungarian context, identifies five key aspects of the mentor's role, which extend well beyond the purely technical side of teaching. In the Support role the mentor supports the mentee as a person; in the Acculturator role the mentor helps the mentee adjust to the culture of the school and the profession in general; in the role of a Model the mentor acts as a professional example; in the Sponsor role the mentor helps the mentee through providing knowledge or contacts; and in the Educator role the mentor helps the mentee to learn and learn how to learn to be a teacher. While the aim of the present research is to construct meaning from the trainees' point of view rather than to test hypotheses, such an in-depth view of the mentor-mentee relationship serves as a useful point of comparison.

Before describing the research in detail, it is important to briefly touch on the current situation of the public education system in which the trainees did their practice. The trend within public education in Hungary has been one of growing teacher shortages in many subjects (Juhász, 2021) and a rising average age of the teaching population (Eurydice, 2023). The shortage of teachers means that pre-service teachers are sometimes employed by schools to give lessons while they are also doing their practice. This applied to seven of the participants and the status of such trainees within their schools is obviously somewhat complicated.

On top of these problems, there is a stark divide in the country between schools in different regions in terms of resources, particularly with regard to access to digital technology (Huszti, 2020), and this became impossible to ignore during the enforced lockdowns caused by the Covid 19 pandemic (Czifra et al., 2021). Furthermore, in 2023 the Hungarian government announced a new law, named the Status Law (Magyar Közlöny, 2023), which changed the legal status of teachers from public servants

to employees and imposed a number of extra duties upon them (TASZ, 2023). This led to a number of protests, resignations and sackings in schools around the country. The effect on teacher morale and also on the public image of teachers was mentioned several times by the participants in this study.

2. Research design

In the spring semester of 2023, all 133 graduating English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher trainees in a large Hungarian university were contacted by email and 33 agreed to be interviewed. The interviews were done on Teams and video-recorded with the participants' permission (a single interview was done face-to-face and audio recorded) from June to September. An interview guide as described by Patton (2014) with five main foci (general introductory questions, your story as a trainee, your experience during your long and short teaching practice, your intentions for the future, your feelings about the public education system) was used and further refined after the first few interviews. The interviews were transcribed automatically on Teams and then checked for accuracy using the video recordings. They ranged from 25 minutes to around 80 minutes.

A thematic coding approach (Saldana 2021) was used to analyse the interviews. The transcriptions were coded for patterns and then descriptive categories were built using an extended phrase or sentence as category label (Saldana 2021 p. 258). In this paper only those categories relevant to the trainees' relationships with their mentors will be discussed.

In the next section, data extracts from the interviews will be coded according to the order in which they occurred, so TT1 refers to the first trainee teacher to be interviewed, and page numbers refer to the interview transcript.

3. Results and discussion

Before examining the relevant categories, a brief description of the participants' training is necessary. All of the participants had completed a six-year MA training programme in which the whole of the final year is spent in a school, usually a public secondary school in the place where the trainee is living. In several cases this was the school they themselves attended as students. Before this two-semester long practicum, each participant had completed a short teaching practice (STP) in each of their chosen subjects, English and another subject, in a practice school affiliated to the university for the purpose. The trainees had to teach 15 lessons under the guidance of a qualified mentor. In their long teaching practice (LTP) they also had mentor teachers for their two subjects. Table 1 below shows the second subjects of all the interviewed trainees.

	Hungarian	History	German	French	Media	Italian	Biology	Music	Russian
Trainee	3, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 26, 27, 33	7, 10, 19, 22, 24, 31	1, 2, 18, 25, 32	4, 13, 14, 29	16, 17, 20	23, 30	6	21	28

Table 1: The other major of the trainees (in addition to EFL).

Note: Each teacher trainee is numbered according to the order in which they were interviewed.

The first thing to say about the experience of the trainees is that in nearly all cases it was mixed. Most of the trainees had both good and bad experiences; however, only three reported that they had only good relationships with their mentors. Those trainees who enjoyed good relationships were very much aware that this was not always the case: "I got great mentors, which is very lucky because some people really are not that lucky" (TT9, p. 3, talking about her STP mentors). The following two quotes illustrate what can be thought of as two extremes on the range of possibilities: "I think my mentor teacher in History was the ideal one for me because she always wanted me to bring in my own ideas" (TT31); "And I also told her I don't want her to come to my lessons ever again because it's not helping

me. It's the opposite, and she didn't want to accept it" (TT18). In between these two extremes there were many examples of good and bad relationships. In the next section, the category describing the causes of bad relationships will be described.

3.1 The causes of bad mentor-mentee relationships

Three main subcategories emerged from the trainees' discussion of problematic relationships with their mentors. Each of these will be described in turn.

3.1.1 The mentor's need for control

Being forced to teach in the same way as their mentor teacher was mentioned by several trainees and it was something they found very frustrating:

«My mentor teacher was very dominating, she exactly told me what to teach and she called me on the phone and she was telling me literally hours and hours that what do I have to say during the lesson. And she expected the frontal lessons» (TT3, p. 4).

Even though she appreciated her STP History mentor as a teacher, Trainee 7 also felt like she was "not on the same page" (p. 4) with her and that "she tried to push her ways of doing things on me" (p. 4). Talking about her French LTP mentor, Trainee 4 said "I felt like he was very bothered with the fact that someone was interfering" (p. 10) and she thought that their different teaching styles was the cause: "This was his thing, and suddenly there was comparison" (p. 10). In a similar way, trainee 28 was told by her English LTP mentor, "please don't ruin my class. Please don't ruin the rules I've made for them or the habits I've made for them" (p. 9), and this upset her: "I had to do everything as I was told and I felt some things really bothering me" (p. 9).

Another way in which the mentor's need for control could affect trainees was not allowing them to teach alone. Both trainees 9 and 31 experienced mentors in their LTP who sat in on all their lessons. Trainee 9 asked her English mentor to let her teach alone but "he insisted on coming in and didn't get the message that I was not comfortable" (p. 5). For trainee 31, her Hungarian mentor told her what to teach and how, and "she just always wanted to be there somewhere, and she even interrupted my lessons sometimes" (p. 10). Unsurprisingly, this had a humiliating effect on her: "I felt so little" (p. 10). Being tightly controlled by their mentors prevented trainees from trying things out for themselves and developing their own teaching style. The freedom to experiment was one of the things they most valued in a mentor relationship, as will be seen.

3.1.2 Criticism that hurts face

While trainees valued constructive feedback, for example, trainee 33 appreciated the help of her STP Hungarian mentor: "he was really good at giving constructive criticism" (p. 5), being given only criticism was something that did not help them. Trainee 27 felt that she only received negative feedback during her English STP: "I want to get some positive feedback as well so I can have some motivation and go on and this never happened" (p. 7).

Being criticized in front of their students by their mentor could be even more damaging. Trainee 2 had a bad relationship with her LTP mentor in English: "I did not like my mentor teacher that much because she (pauses) she wasn't that supportive and she talked badly about me in front of my students." This disturbed her enough to report it to her university teachers, and although she had already decided that she would not be a high school teacher, it seems likely that this experience only reinforced her decision.

Trainee 29 had the same experience with her French LTP mentor and it was connected to wanting the trainee to teach in her way. She felt it was "kind of embarrassing in front of the kids" (p. 5) but "I could fight the lion" (p. 5), a metaphor which she used to describe how she dealt with her fears about teaching French.

A special case was that of trainee 18, who did her STP and LTP in the same school and was also employed to teach German to four groups when a full-time teacher left abruptly. The relationship with her mentor had started well in her STP but when she started teaching more groups than her mentor, the relationship changed. The trainee felt that her mentor "tried to sabotage my, I don't know, my

teaching practice" (p. 7), and the criticism she received extended to the other German teachers at the school, causing her to doubt her abilities: "sometimes I was just so confused because I had no idea whether I was so bad at German" (p. 6). After a difficult four-month period, the stress from which led to health problems, the situation was resolved with the support of her head teacher at the school. This demonstrates the difficult conditions in which many of the trainees found themselves because of the tensions within the education system. Trainees who are also paid teachers in a school have a dual identity which can lead to problems with their colleagues and threaten their professional development.

3.1.3 Not feeling supported

Several of the trainees reported feeling that they did not receive enough help from their mentors, particularly during the LTP. For example, trainee 16 reported having to hunt down her English mentor teacher: "at the beginning of the year, I had to chase her because she didn't want to deal with me" (p. 7). Trainee 24 did not feel supported by either of her LTP mentors: "I could feel that they are not interested in my work and they are not mentoring ... but it was just like doing the things, so the needed things. They signed my papers and so it was not so improving" (p. 10).

Altogether 13 trainees mentioned not getting enough support from one or more of their mentors. This could lead to trainees feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope, damaging their self-confidence.

3.2 The characteristics of good mentor-mentee relationships

Only three subcategories will be described relating to positive mentor-mentee relationships, but these were the three clearest to emerge from the data.

3.2.1 Getting meaningful support

All the trainees appreciated getting support, but in particular they appreciated useful feedback that helped them with their teaching. Trainee 33 has already been mentioned. Trainee 11 struggled with discipline in one English group in her LTP and used a psychological trick her mentor suggested: "it was my mentor teacher who helped me with this. So she had this idea, this coloring thing" (p. 3). Trainee 21 was also given some techniques to help her control her English class by her mentor in her STP. Trainee 1 felt she had been given good practical support by her English STP mentor: "We managed to work together very, very well. He managed to really show me the ropes of how it is to be done" (p. 4). Trainees also appreciated their mentor giving them moral support when they needed it. Trainee 23 mentioned that her LTP Italian mentor "supported me during my difficult periods that I had from time to time" (p. 4), and trainee 25 noted that while her German mentor focused on teaching matters, her English mentor concentrated more on her wellbeing during her LTP. Trainee 31 had a very close relationship with her LTP History mentor, who encouraged her to experiment but also supported her emotionally: "So she asked me every day, how do I feel, am I too tired to teach this class today, and she even visited me in my home and she brought me some chocolate when I felt low" (p. 11).

3.2.2 Being given the chance to experiment

The chance to try out their own ideas was something that nearly all the trainees mentioned as being important for them. It was highly appreciated by trainees who experienced it, but it was also frequently mentioned as being a vital characteristic of a good mentor: "they shouldn't just, like, stick to their old or own ideas, but they should let the teacher trainee experiment and try out new things" (Trainee 32, p.11).

Finding out for themselves what works and what does not is a vital step in the development of any learner, and this is no less true for teaching. Trainee 5 talking about her LTP mentors: "They also gave me freedom and autonomy in my decisions and it meant a lot to me that they trusted me with this" (p. 8). Trainee 21 said her LTP mentors "let me try my own ideas. My creative ideas and, and I appreciated that" (p. 5), and many others echoed the sentiment.

3.2.3 Being treated as a colleague

Another important subcategory was the impact that being treated as a colleague by their mentors had on the trainees. Psychologically it was very important for them to be acknowledged as a fellow

practitioner and this emerged strongly in the data for those trainees who experienced it and also as a quality of the ideal mentor: “a good mentor teacher is someone who kind of treats you as a colleague” (Trainee 12, p. 7)

Trainee 5 mentioned that many teachers in her LTP treated her as a colleague: “and that not only felt good, but also helped me, you know, take on this teacher role, which was difficult for me at the beginning” (p. 8). Trainee 28 appreciated that she could work together with her Russian mentor in her LTP as opposed to being tightly controlled by her English mentor.

The reception of the school in general was important for many trainees. Trainee 15 found it difficult to balance her multiple identities of trainee teacher, paid lesson giver and former student in her LTP school: “it was first hard to find a balance between being an, almost a colleague and a real, real colleague and still a trainee and a former student” (p. 6). However, “the other colleagues helped me to settle down in this community” (p. 6). Trainee 33 in her LTP mentioned the same thing: “I really like the atmosphere of the school because I felt like that the colleagues and the other teachers there looked at us teacher trainees like we were also colleagues” (p. 6).

4. Conclusions

Of the 33 participants in this study, 18 had decided not to become a teacher in a public school, and only three intended to be a teacher for more than the following year (the period needed to acquire full teacher status). This underlines a fundamental problem in the Hungarian education system, a problem which is shared across Europe. A recent report states that 35 countries in Europe face a shortage of teachers and only three have a surplus (European Commission, 2021). The sample size in this research is small, but given the current situation, the fact that so few of the participants intended to pursue what they had been training to do for six years is highly concerning, as is the frequency of problematic mentor-mentee relationships.

Given the need for more teachers to enter and remain in the profession for a sustained period, the influence of mentor teachers during trainees’ practicums is crucial in allowing and encouraging trainees to develop their own teaching identity and assisting them in becoming effective classroom practitioners. While the difficult conditions for teachers in Hungary (the same report lists Hungary as having the highest regulated teaching hours, 26) will continue to be a significant factor in trainees’ decision-making, creating a better quality of mentor-mentee relationship will undoubtedly have a positive effect, and having a clearer understanding of the mentee’s point of view is an important step towards that end.

Of course, in a short paper it is not possible to explore the richness of the data in great depth; nevertheless, it is hoped that even these limited findings have the potential to help both parties be more successful in their partnership, a partnership which is absolutely vital for the future of education. It is also hoped that the present study will add to the growing literature on pre-service training in many countries and begin to fill a gap in such research in the Hungarian system.

Bibliography

- Bailey, K. M. (2006). *Language teacher supervision: A case-based approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Council of the European Union, (2014). *Conclusions on effective teacher education: EDUCATION, YOUTH, CULTURE and SPORT Council meeting Brussels, 20 May 2014*. Official Journal of the European Union, Retrieved from https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/142690.pdf
- Czifra, B., Németh, E., Nagy, Z., & Tegzesné Czigler, E. G. (2021). *A digitális oktatás tapasztalatainak értékelése [Evaluating the experiences of digital education]*. Budapest: Állami Számvevőszék.
- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2021). *Teachers in Europe: Careers, Development and Well-being*. Eurydice report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2797/997402>
- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2023). *Structural indicators for monitoring education and training systems in Europe – 2023: The teaching profession*. Eurydice report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. <file:///C:/Users/presc/Downloads/structural%20indicators%20for%20monitoring%20education%20and-EC0523325ENN.pdf>
- Eurydice (2023). *9. Magyarország: Pedagógusok és oktatók 9.2 Magyarország: A pedagógusok munkakörülményei [9. Hungary: Teachers and trainers 9.2 Hungary: Working conditions of teachers]*. European Commission. <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/hu/national-education-systems/hungary/magyarorszagpedagogusok-munkakorulmenyei>

- Heinz M. (2024) The practicum in initial teacher education – enduring challenges, evolving practices and future research directions, *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 47:5, 865–875, DOI: 10.1080/02619768.2024.2428031
- Husztí, E. (2020). A digitális egyenlőtlenség vizsgálata a társadalmi kirekesztődés szempontjából. [Examining digital inequality from the perspective of social exclusion] *Acta Medicinæ Et Sociologica*, 11(30), 67–81. <https://doi.org/10.19055/ams.2020.11/30/7>
- Juhász, D. (2021, January 5). Egyre kevesebb a főállású pedagógus [There are fewer and fewer full-time teachers]. *Népszava* [The People's Voice]. https://nepszava.hu/3104843_egyre-kevesebb-a-foallasu-pedagogus
- Magyar Közlöny [Hungarian Gazette]. (2023, July 6). 2023. évi LII. törvény A pedagógusok új életpályájáról 4994 [LII of 2023. Act 4994 on the new life path of teachers]. Ministry of Justice. <https://magyarkozlony.hu/dokumentumok/8615f0642888805693ff027c1cee219e6243dcd6/megtekintes>
- Malderez, A. (2024). *Mentoring Teachers: Supporting Learning, Wellbeing and retention*. Routledge.
- OECD (2019), *A Flying Start: Improving Initial Teacher Preparation Systems*, OECD Publishing, <https://doi.org/10.1787/cf74e549-en>.
- Patton, M. (2014). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Prescott-Pickup, F. J. (2023). The experience of teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond: the view of new teachers. In Dr A. Dobos (Ed.), *Aktuális kihívások a szak/nyelvoktatásban: A módszertani megújulás lehetőségei*, Tanulmánykötet (pp. 50–58). Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem. https://unipub.lib.uni-corvinus.hu/8092/1/IOK_konferenciakotet_2022.pdf
- Reid, J. A. (2011). A practice turn for teacher education? *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(4), 293–310. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2011.614688>
- Saldana, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- TASZ (2023). Mit kell tudni a státusztörvényről? [What do you need to know about the Status Law?]. The Hungarian Civil Liberties Union. <https://tasz.hu/mit-kell-tudni-astatusztorvenyrol>